

Will anything be built through South Mountain Park/Preserve?

Federal restrictions prohibit intrusion of a federal project such as this into a park, like South Mountain Park/Preserve, unless it can be shown that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to avoid such an intrusion. As of November 2005, the team has not identified feasible and prudent alternatives to avoid impacts on the park. As such, the freeway would go through the southern limits of the park. ADOT is working closely with park stakeholders to minimize impacts.

How would the Santan/I-10 Interchange connect to the west?

The existing interchange was designed as a temporary connection with Pecos Road. It also is designed so that a permanent connection could be made if a freeway is built on Pecos Road or another alignment to the south.

Where will the on- and off-ramps be? Will there be access to the Gila River Indian Community?

The study team is working with the local jurisdictions, including Phoenix, Tolleson, Avondale and the Gila River Indian Community, regarding where on- and off-ramps would be located for each alternative.

What is pass-through traffic?

Traffic that neither starts nor ends in the Valley is referred to as “pass -through.” An example is I-10 traffic that originates in Los Angeles and *passes through* the Phoenix area without stopping on the way to El Paso.

Is it possible to use federal funds to build a freeway and not allow trucks to use the freeway?

It is technically possible and has been done, although only in very unusual circumstances. It is not a common practice and is not very likely to happen.

What kind of freeway design would fit into the Pecos Road alignment?

Engineering studies show that a freeway, similar to the Pima Freeway or Red Mountain Freeway, can be constructed on the Pecos Road alignment, should that alignment be chosen. Impacts are anticipated and these will be presented officially in the Draft EIS.

Will trucks carrying hazardous cargo be allowed to use the highway?

Yes. The only freeway locations in the Valley where hazardous cargo is prohibited is I-10 through the Deck Tunnel and on the mile-long bridge along the Salt River along Loop 101. Such restrictions on this freeway are not anticipated at this time.

Has a decision been made on the purpose and need for a freeway?

Yes. Based on projections of population growth in the Valley, increases in the number of vehicle miles traveled, and where residences and businesses will be built, it has been determined that there is a need for an I-10 to I-10 connection of some sort south of South Mountain. We are in the process of analyzing alternatives make this connection.

Would a South Mountain Freeway handle all of the excess traffic that is anticipated in 2030?

No. There is no single facility that can accomplish that. This facility is seen as a part of the overall system improvements and expansion that will be needed to handle our future traffic.

How has passage of the proposed extension of Maricopa County's ½ cent transportation sales tax (Proposition 400) in the November 2004 election affected the future of the proposed South Mountain Freeway?

Passage of Proposition 400 provides an additional source of funding for construction of the South Mountain Freeway.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers



about the South Mountain Transportation Corridor Study

November, 2005

Has a corridor along Pecos Road already been decided?

No, however the Pecos Road route was identified as a result of the 1988 state-level Environmental Assessment. This alternative, along with the consequences of building nothing, is being studied.

Why is ADOT conducting a second environmental study?

Much has changed in this area since the 1988 state-level Environmental Assessment was completed. The new study is being conducted in light of new development in the area as well as changes in design standards and environment regulations and to qualify for federal funds.

If the Pecos Road alignment is not a foregone conclusion, then why has ADOT purchased right-of-way along that alignment?

ADOT began purchasing right-of-way in the corridor at a time when a specific alignment along Pecos Road had been identified and adopted (1988). ADOT began acquiring right-of-way to preserve the viability of the corridor and to minimize future relocation of homes and businesses. Should another alternative be adopted as a result of this study, ADOT can dispose of the land that has been acquired but is no longer needed.

Will the fact that ADOT already owns right-of-way in this corridor influence the final decision?

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regulations do not allow the ownership of right-of-way to be a factor in the decision regarding the adoption of an alternative.

Will a corridor on the Gila River Indian Community be considered?

Since the beginning of the study in 2001, ADOT and FHWA have been working with the Gila River Indian Community (GRIC) to determine if a portion of a freeway might be located on

GRIC lands south of Pecos Road. To date no GRIC options have been approved by the Community for further study. GRIC has sole authority to decide if and where a freeway might be studied or built on its land. Therefore if a preferred alternative for the entire corridor must be identified without GRIC alternatives, options would include either a Western Section alternative with the Pecos Road alignment, or not building the South Mountain Freeway.

What factors will be considered in choosing an alternative?

A major factor is how well an alternative might improve future mobility, while minimizing impacts on the built and natural environment. Some factors that will be considered include air quality, cultural sites, environmental justice, threatened and endangered species, potentially hazardous materials, residential and business relocations, utilities, local land use plans, agricultural lands, traffic operations, cost, noise, historic/public park land and public and jurisdictional acceptability.

Will the public have a voice in choosing an alternative?

Yes. An extensive effort is underway in an effort to keep the public informed of the progress of the study and to gain public comment. Issues, concerns and opportunities expressed by citizens will be considered in the ultimate decision of whether or not to build a new facility, what should be built and where it should be located.

Will anything other than a freeway be considered?

Other non-freeway alternatives have been considered. Among other things, the study takes into account improving existing facilities, improving or expanding other travel modes, strategies to reduce travel demand, and various roadway configurations. This study will examine not only the potential impacts from improvements, but also the consequences of building nothing.

Is it possible that nothing will be built?

Yes. That is one of the options being studied. It is important to recognize that impacts can occur by doing nothing.

Would air, noise and visual quality be affected by construction of a new road or freeway?

A major purpose of this study is to determine the potential impacts on air, noise and visual quality and to look for ways to lessen those impacts. The South Mountain Freeway is a large complex project and the study team fully anticipates the project could cause substantial impacts.

What can we do to get Pecos Road taken off the board?

The Pecos Road alignment for a South Mountain Freeway was identified in a state-level Environmental Assessment completed in 1988 and that alignment was adopted by the State Transportation Board. However, as part of this study, all reasonable alternatives are being considered. The Pecos Road alignment is considered a reasonable alternative as a freeway along this alignment in conjunction with a western section alternative would meet the established purpose and need.

Is the Pecos Parkway still a feasible alternative?

As part of the study process, it has been determined that the accepted definition of a parkway within this region ... an arterial street with limited access at signalized intersections ... would not meet the established purpose and need of a transportation facility within this study area, since a parkway would not accommodate the traffic volumes the South Mountain Freeway is anticipated to carry.

Why would you build this if Ahwatukee Foothills doesn't need it?

Although the impact of a transportation improvement on the Ahwatukee Foothills area is

a component of this study, it is only one factor in considering the transportation needs of the entire Phoenix metropolitan area. Future land use and travel patterns will be much different than they are today, and this facility would be built to help serve those future needs.

Will any facility that is built in this corridor be below existing ground?

This issues has not been fully resolved. Several factors have to be considered in determining the elevation of a freeway including the location of traffic interchanges, excavation requirements, drainage concerns, and minimizing visual and noise impacts. The current freeway elevation can change if justifiable reasons are brought to light. As the study moves forward, these and other factors will help us make decisions about the project.

How much influence will developers have in this process?

No more than any other citizen.

Will the City of Phoenix be able to influence the study?

The City of Phoenix represents the citizenry of a major portion of the study and is an active participant, as are the other municipalities and regional planning organizations in this area.

Would this be part of the planned CANAMEX highway?

No. It is not ADOT's intent, nor the FHWA's intent to include this as part of the CANAMEX proposal.

Would this serve mainly as a truck bypass for Phoenix?

No. One of the factors that will be carefully studied is the amount of truck traffic that roads are likely to carry and the potential impact of that traffic on the surrounding communities. The truck bypass of Phoenix is designated and signed to be State Route 85 and Interstate 8.